



SPENCER J. COX
Governor

DEIDRE HENDERSON
Lieutenant Governor

State of Utah

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

JOEL FERRY
Executive Director

Division of State Parks

SCOTT STRONG
Division Director

Date: March 6, 2024

To: Representative Thomas Tiffany, Chairman, Subcommittee on Federal Lands

From: Scott Strong, Utah Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Park, Director

Subject: H.R. 7332, Conveyance of Certain Federal Land to the State of Utah for Inclusion in Utah's State Parks

Chairman Tiffany,

I am privileged to endorse Representative Maloy's legislative proposal concerning Utah State Parks, which seeks to enable land transfers destined to improve and expand recreation in Utah.

Fremont Indian State Park:

The main campground, Castle Rock Campground, alongside its utilities, is currently on land owned by the Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service (USFS). For over two decades, we have operated this campground under a permit from the USFS, which must be renewed every five years. Our ambition to modernize this campground with necessary improvements such as paved roads, trails, and essential utilities is hindered by federal restrictions that mandate a more primitive setup due to our status as permittees.

Discussions have occurred between the Utah State Parks (USP) and the local Forest Service Office regarding a potential land exchange. However, the absence of adjacent land owned by USP for such a trade complicates matters. A legislative directive facilitating this land transfer would empower USP to enhance the campground significantly, providing improved recreational facilities and streamlined onsite management.

Antelope Island State Park:

Our tenure of the in-holdings at Antelope Island State Park was originally sanctioned under the Department of Interior's Recreation and Public Purposes Act. Unfortunately, this lease was terminated by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), with no recourse for appeal. Gaining ownership through legislative means would reduce bureaucratic overhead, improve operational efficiency, and enhance recreational amenities. We aim to integrate these parcels into the park's recreational offerings, enhancing the trail network and public access.

Wasatch Mountain State Park:



Page 2

March 6, 2024

Subject: H.R. 7332, Conveyance of Certain Federal Land to the State of Utah for Inclusion in Utah's State Parks

Similar to Antelope Island State Park, Wasatch Mountain State Park encompasses BLM in-holdings of unpatented mining claims within the Snake Creek Mining District, surrounded mostly by land owned by USP. The cancellation of our lease by BLM has prompted a need for ownership transfer to mitigate administrative costs, streamline management, and improve recreational infrastructure. The inclusion of these parcels would not only expand the park's recreational estate but also provide significant enhancements to the trail network, benefiting numerous outdoor enthusiasts.

In conclusion, the transfer of these lands to Utah State Parks would unlock the potential for considerable improvements in public recreation, active land management efforts, and administrative efficiency. Legislative support for these actions would signify a commitment to the well-being of our state's natural resources and the communities that enjoy and rely on them. I urge the committee to consider the positive impacts of these proposals and support our efforts to secure a brighter, more accessible, and sustainable future for our state parks.

Thank you for your time and consideration.